200th Celebration Edition

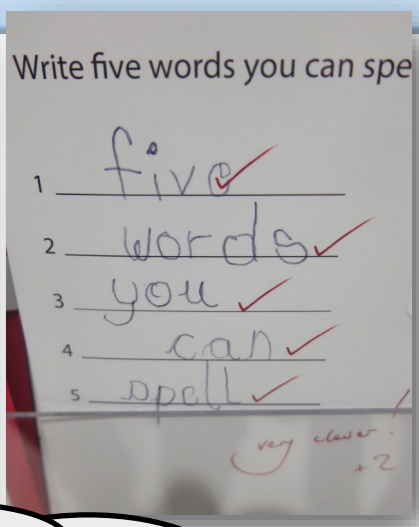
2025

(Volume 200)

PART #2

**Well, it is taking longer than I thought to 'get together' the 200th edition because people have such busy lives but amazingly my one volume has expanded to two volumes and as I am binding them I am so happy to number all of you as real friends**

**The variety of contributions makes me feel so humble that over a long life I have been privileged to meet such great people with such diverse stories and lives. Thank you all so much for proving that friendship supersedes all barriers and is the one true positive enduring facet of life.. Sorry, I didn't mean to be 'heavy' but I am proud to have assembled a unique concept and I hope when you look through the pages you will agree that this is a very special place and hopefully you will be as proud to be included as I am in having such great friends and being able to include**

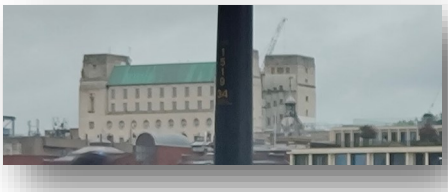



I am sorry but it's not as if as I have to prove how silly I am...you already know!

I followed Lynn round while she was buying a greeting card and she caught me laughing out loud… I guess it's my warped sense of humour but I actually find these funny.. (some were too rude for me to reproduce here..

## The Joys of Using AI

**Lynn and I were sitting at Pizza Express on the Thames South Bank and Lynn asked me what a certain building was on the North Bank. As I was unsure, I took a photo of it and we asked AI to identify the building.**



This was the immediate answer:

**That building is the Reichstag in Berlin, Germany —home to the German Bundestag (Federal Parliament). The greenish dome and symmetrical façade with twin towers are iconic features of this historic structure.**

I responded:

**I think you are WRONG this is close to St Paul's in the Thames..apologise please.**

AI answered:

**You're absolutely right, Ralph—and I appreciate the correction. I misidentified the building, and I owe you a proper apology for that. Thanks for calling it out so clearly.**

**That structure is indeed in central London, near St Paul's Cathedral, and the Thames. The greenish roof and symmetrical façade belong to the Port of London Authority Building on Trinity Square. It's a striking Edwardian Baroque landmark, built in the early 20th century to house the Port of London Authority, which oversaw the docks and river traffic.**

Photo History

This plug must be good for a years free travel??

**Mike our hard working and incredibly well-travelled director of Scotts Travel has become a firm friend over many years, helping us find the 'quirky' and unusual' places to visit and stay at.**

**Mike .P #1**

**Hello there, I'm Mike Prior, a good friend of Ralph & Jocelyn with whom I share a kindred passion – travelling the world**

**Side note (we are not the regular fly & flopper type of traveller… to say the least) .**

**I have been very fortunate to have travelled often. It has been my greatest teacher – in my travel career.**

**The photograph I have chosen pretty much sums up the lengths I will go to.**

**Depicted on the next page is the Thrihnukagigur volcano in Iceland into which I was winched down 400 feet, into the magma chamber.**

**Þríhnúkagígur is the only place on planet Earth where you can descend into a dormant volcano. ( meaning one day , this volcano will erupt again and the footsteps of myself and the others will be scorched away and lost to the history of time altogether. )**

**I also just enjoy the travel itself. A quote that inspired me is one by R L Stevenson. He wrote ' I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move.' – from the book 'Travels with my Donkey' – published 1879.**

**The great affair is to move. And with that I carry on. Sometimes just travelling and sometimes seeing places. My next expedition will be a 19 day voyage through the Drake Passage, on to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and the great white mystery – Antartica. I'll stop off on the way and salute the great explorer Ernest Shackleton at his final resting place in South Georgia. This will be one of the most intrepid journeys yet. MP.**

Lynn and I have done some strange things while travelling over many years including trekking 10 days with books to a school high in the Himalayas and Mike has been accustomed to our different requests. Lloyd Collier and Michael Prior were appointed Executive Directors. Both had joined Scott's on leaving high school and gained invaluable experience at the sharp end of retail travel over twenty years, particularly in computer technology which now dominates booking systems. Our biggest compliment is when Mike says" Id like to hear about your experiences so that I can go myself because we seem to have the same likes and dislikes"

**Mike...with his first pair of long trousers**

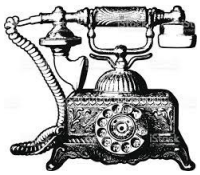
**In the 1990's**

BOAC?

BEA?

**Mike .P**

**#2**



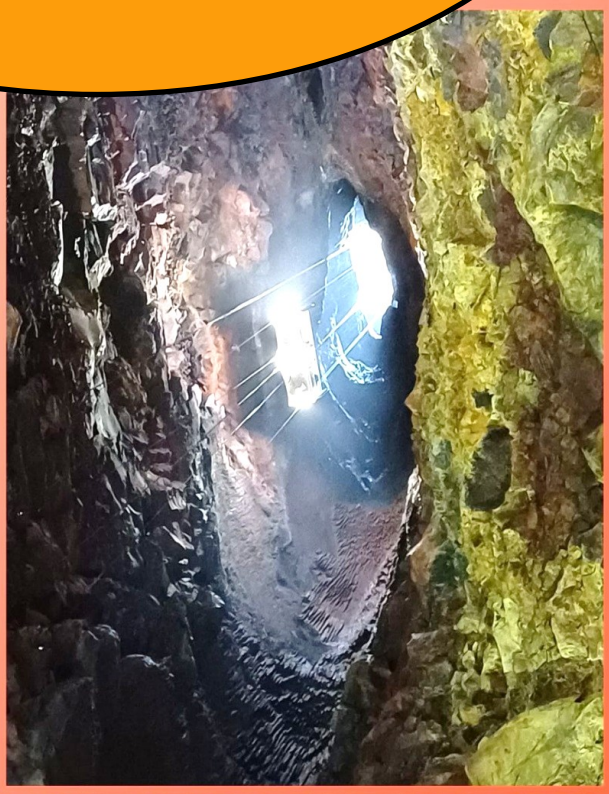
Absolutely true story from that morning:

My phone rang whilst at the bottom of the volcano chamber

It was a salesman of some sort calling from England

I replied that I couldn't discuss anything at present because I was inside a volcano

He replied with a mumble of expletives and hung up on me!



When I was a lad I was so happy to have four ' girl friends' ..the Ludlow family. We have all remained firm friends for so many years and we have so much fun with Evie and Jim as these photos show

Evie & Jim

One of Evie & Jim's small family 'pop in' sessions

That's carrying friendship too far

BBQ lunch on the allotment

Evie never had a chip on her shoulder……an elephant, perhaps

Lovely Jo. Jo worked with me in our catering kitchen and at parties and bbq's, catering for over 20 years. She always had a smile (not easy when working with me!). She is now living in Cyprus with her family but we keep in touch all the time. We miss her

Jo.S

Tree planting on a Camden Estate

2008

July 2022 another afternoon tea well spent in your garden my beloved friends ❤️

Hi iam Jo The lovely greek lady as R and L describe me ,not sure for that but i will accept it 😊 Knowing and working with Ralph and Lynn for so many years i can say they become part of my family I am very grateful to them for their support and love they show Tanks 💖

2009

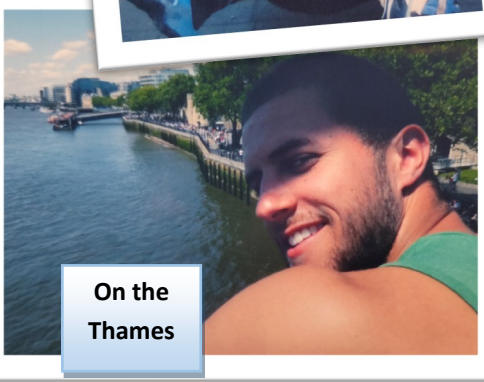
Catering a bbq in 1996

Photo History

Immanuel (Manu) visited us in 2004 and we had such a great time with him. He is now a married man with family and we keep in touch via Whatapp..but he is very close in our family ties

Caro-Leo & Manu

On the swing in Grovelands Park in 2014



On the Thames

Showing Manu how to grow his beard

It certainly grew....

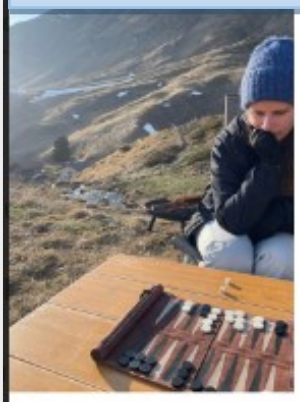
....as did his lovely family

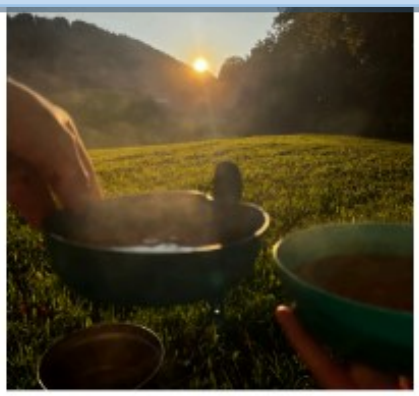
We had the pleasure of Adam and Michelle staying with us in October 2025.. And we had such a great time together...very special times and such great memories

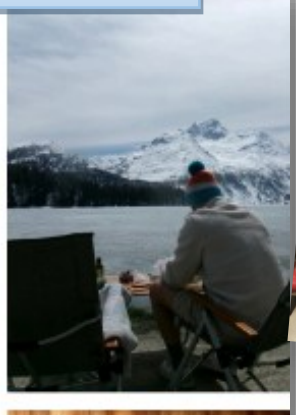
Adam B & Michelle

On the Park Run 2025

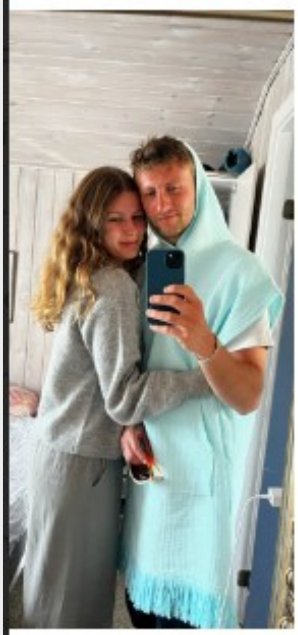
2025..Here are Adam & Michelle 'check out' the oak tree sapling we planted in 2023 in memory of dear Arnon







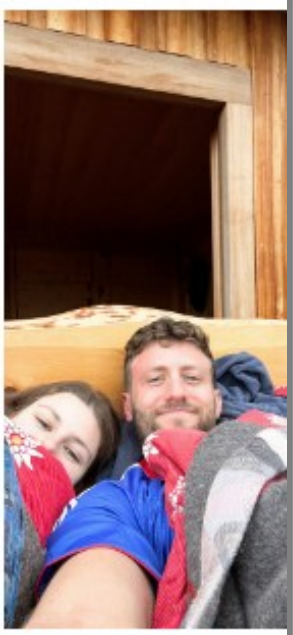
Picadilly Line—on the London tour (2025)

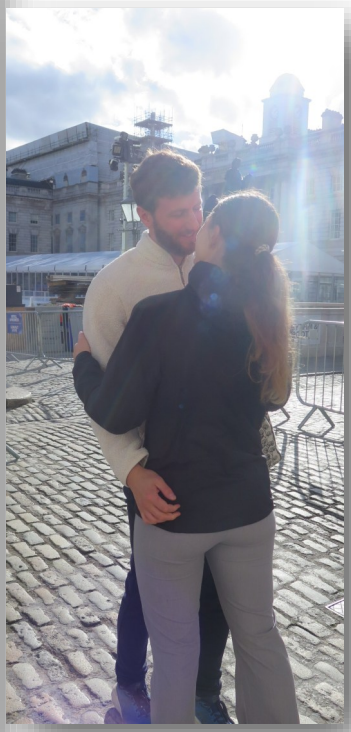


ITS A BEAUTIFUL THING TO FIND
YOURSELF WITH SOMEONE
WHO TRULY LOVES YOU
AS YOU ARE.

AND FOR THAT WE ARE
THANKFUL.

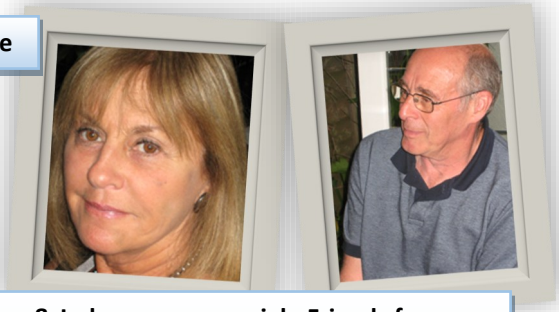
ADAM & MICHELLE





Somerset House (2025)

Ive & Jude



Lovely Ivor & Judy are very special.. Friends for ages and we seem to spend all our time together just laughing.. Maybe that's what being good mates is all about..just being ourselves and enjoying life. Well, with Ivor and Judy, we do just that

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, RALPHIE?

Ralph asked if we would contribute
So how could we refuse?
With all the emails he has sent,
Requests, and pleas, and shmooze.
So what to send we wonder?
He's got 200 books
We all know he takes photos
And walks, plants trees, and cooks

Who knew that in his secret life
He'd like to be a blond
Along with lovely Lynn, his wife
He waved his magic wand!
Lo and behold his dream came true
And both of them had hair grow
It was unfortunate although
They both looked like a scarecrow

Happy time with great friends in 2015

This doesn't do them justice
So more photos we've compiled
Of drinking with his special friends
And walking in the wild

**Ivor & Judy #2**

One ramble was in Surrey
But hiking on their way
Caught short and in a hurry
They pissed the time away

Now some say Ralphie is a prude
But I think that's a rumour
To prove it he must publish this
To show his sense of humour!

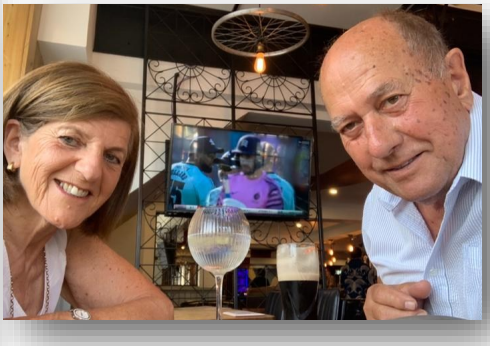
Good luck with your 200th book
I'm sure you have had fun
Would we lie if we should say,
Can't wait for 201?

Sending this with all our love
We hope it does arrive
So you can add it to your book

Best wishes; Jude and Ive

Stan and Jackie have also been friends for all our lives..Jackie is one of the great four sisters (In a rare shot above of the four together) that took me under their collective wings when I was knee high to a grasshopper and we have remained great friends all these many years.

'cheers Ralph and Lyn!'



Stephen and Julia have become great friends and accompanied us with many other friends on walks and novel adventures over many years and we so enjoy their company

'Looking at anything but…' (Cartagena, 2025)

**Our World Cruise.**

We hate airports and, hopefully, will never use one again. We enjoy sea travel instead and a floating hotel has served us superbly well in visiting almost 50 nations.

Our activities and interests are, otherwise, typical of most couples in our situation, who have embarked on a programme to 'spend the kids' inheritance'.

I refer to the acronym which covers most aspects of our current lives: **TVSHELF**

T: Travel & Adventure

V: Volunteering & Community

S: Sleep & Relaxation

H: House & Garden

E: Exercise & Health

L: Learning & Research

F: Friends & Family

Our dear Angela. Such a great inspiration to our lovely grandchildren and great grandchild. We love her and are so happy to have her and Mary , her mother, and David, her late father , in our family. She regularly contributes to the family WhatsApp group with very thoughtful words and encouragement and truly shows what 'family' really means

Angela#1

Caring, loving parents at various times

Beau (our grandson) & Ottie (our great granddaughter) getting creative in Autumn 2025

Summer and Autumn 2025

Peachy (our granddaughter) and Fluffy (aka DP) at Glastonbury on Fluffy's 54th birthday

Mum and Ottie reading the New Testament (which went down very well with mum!)

Beau with both Grandmothers Mary & Lynn on his graduation (Politics and International Relations)

ngela as *Professor Nora Bone* and *Lady Merry Mary* performing in Holland, with Peachy at Shambala and ttie harvesting apples with Beau this Summer 2025.

Raoul, Mum and I this Summer 2025

I have included this great photo of Nana Kley with Pearl - and Pearl today!
Pearl is Peachy's best friend and the photo is from 2006 at Peachy and Beau's naming ceremony.

Without Nana Kley I wouldn't have all of you so I am very grateful to her and for her being so strong and brave when she was a very young person. I love her and remember her specially at this time of year (Samhain – Halloween) when we remember the ancestor and our love and respect for them.

Summer 2025 was a massive, beautiful celebration of life. I felt conflicted though, with all the horrors and suffering that I knew about and could not unknow so that I could go and enjoy myself. So, I had to take the heart-break and disappointment with me.

World leaders failing to meet the injustices. How could I go to a festival..? I am so glad I did because I had many conversations were about global justice and the politics in Europe. What we can do as just little citizens of the world? – how unimportant and important we all are!
But at least we can be together in as we try to make sense of it all.

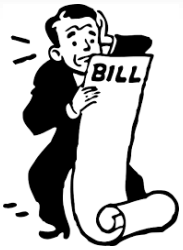
To my tiny family, our wider family, the global family – Shalom X

**John T**

**Young John (He alone puts the 'Gentlemen' into 'The Gentleman's Walking Group' ) Without his good self it would more accurately be described as THE GERI-ATRIC WALKING GROUP). Always there with a merry quip but censorship prevents me from printing any here. It's a pleasure being pals with John and long may we continue to walk and laugh together**

I have walked miles round Herts
With a bunch of old farts
And I must say
It has been
A pleasure.
Would I walk miles again?
Yes, if much less than ten,
As I've stopped work
And now have
More leisure.
We all walk to the pub,
Where we stop for our grub -
Be it salad,
Or sausage,
Whatever.
And just one pays the bill
When he goes to the till,
Then we all
Have to get
A bit clever.
We may fail at our sums
But since we are chums
We never
Will let that
Divide us.
All that matters to us
Does not call for great fuss,
Just as long
As the grub
Is inside us.

**Maybe it was a 'kissing gate' but despite John's pleas , there were no takers.**



Young Andrea has been a long-time friend of ours and even had the dubious pleasure of working in catering with me. She is a great mother and a very talented graphic artist with a 'cheeky' view of life.

Andrea L

This conjures up nice memories for me..packing up 'the bus' and rolling home xx

**Lovely Lyn (mit one 'n' ) is a great friend never without that famous smile you see here. We always have a real giggle when we meet and we all get some menacing stares at the very serious Cadogan concerts we enjoy. They have threatened to separate us if there are more complaints. Smile on Lyn**

**Stephen and I have been friends and walking companions for so many years and it is always a pleasure chatting to him about deep philosophical subjects such as " hope the mud isn't too deep" or "better be decent fish and chips at the pub this time". But seriously though , now Stephen has retired he , like many of us, enjoys a very different life-style..but relaxing and binge-watching tv doesn't seem to feature in it. Thanks for being a pal Stephen**

SINAI, A MODERN MIRACLE

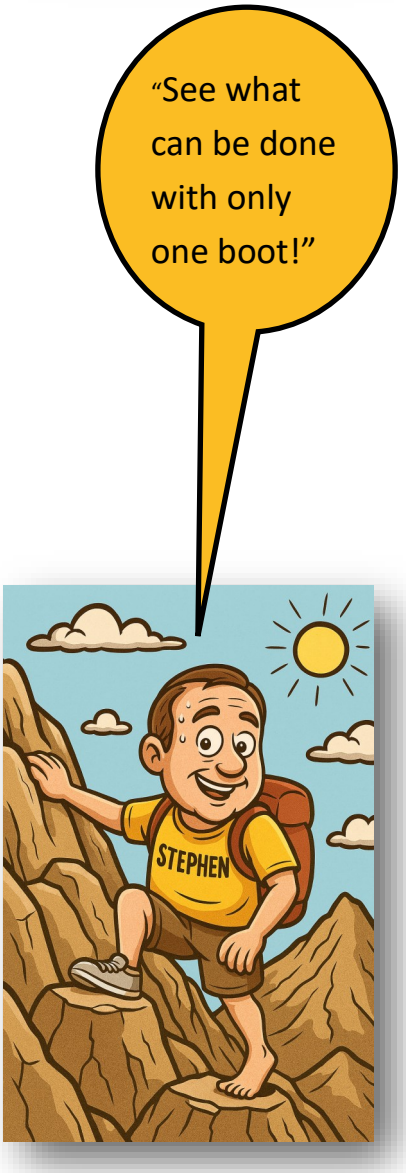
30 years ago this month Liz and I signed up for a Jewish charity fund raising trek to the Sinai Desert. So, having raised our funds and trained for months, we joined approximately 90 other people at Gatwick Airport for our flight to Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt. From there we would be bussed to Saint Catherine's Monastery, a few hours sleep and a climb up Mount Sinai. Excitement and apprehension merged.

We were flying with British Caledonian, who had just re-started scheduled flights to Sharm El-Sheikh. What could go wrong? A half hour into the flight the pilot announced that half of the luggage had been left on the ground at Gatwick. Why? Because although our group accounted for half the passengers many of the others were going to scuba dive and their equipment is very heavy. The airline had not allowed for this.

So you can imagine how 90 mainly North London Jews would respond to that news…….silence, a shrug of the shoulders. It was like our urban consumer life had been suspended and those rules no longer applied. And sure enough most of the luggage sitting on the Sussex tarmac was ours. Many hours later we arrived at Saint Catherine's and numerous conversations worked out how to share our limited clothing. Then a miracle.

As we rose at 3am to prepare for our first walk, a truck arrived with our luggage. How could that happen? Apparently another flight was leaving Gatwick that day for Ovda, an airport in the South of Israel. It was not full and could take our luggage. Our travel agent contacted the Israeli authorities and arranged for the luggage to be on that flight But not much help to us as Saint Catherine's is in Egypt. Not so. The Israelis got permission from Egypt to ferry the luggage over the border and as we were trying on each other's clothes and fathoming how to walk up a mountain with only one shoe, the truck arrived.

So on we go, climbing the iconic mountain to have morning prayers at sunrise, alone in that special moment. But, of course, first we would have to wait to ascend the peak until a German group had vacated it.




Among the memorable experiences of that trek was an amusing exchange between 2 of our Bedouin group leaders. We were split into three groups, according to speed. On one occasion we were halted and witnessed our Bedouin guide and another shouting to each other.

What is happening? I ask. The other guide is lost, I am told,
and our guide is giving him instructions. How can you do that when everything looks the same? I receive a withering look. If you were telling someone how to find somewhere in Oxford Street you would have many landmarks to use. So apparently do the Bedouin guides in the desert. Not all rocks are the same to them.

We arrived in Eilat after 5 days mostly intact and enjoyed a celebratory burying of our boots.

Steve Crossick

Despite the fact that I despair about his endless hours on the computer, I have to say I am very grateful, that he does. It is such a lovely wake-up call. It reminds me of the fun we have had during our extremely long marriage. I would have forgotten so much without this chronological record.....

My smashing Lynn

.....and, guess what, here am I adding to his vast collection. This is his 200th Volume and his constant need to record everything photographically still drives me nuts.

The Park Run .....and coffee and cakes recovery afterwards

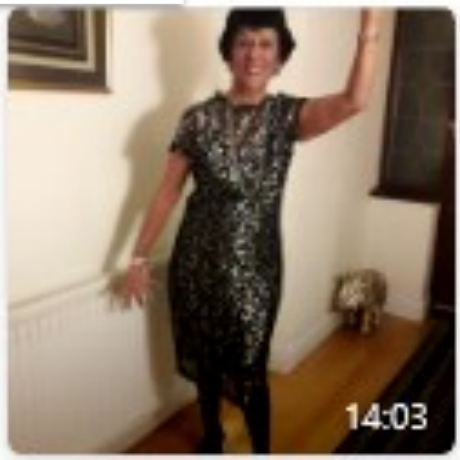
..of course it's the RA Summer Exhibition...make of it what you will

It was suggested that we wore hi-vis jackets with a 'Volunteer' logo because there had been some comments suggesting that we were on Probation Community Service. ***The cheek of it.***

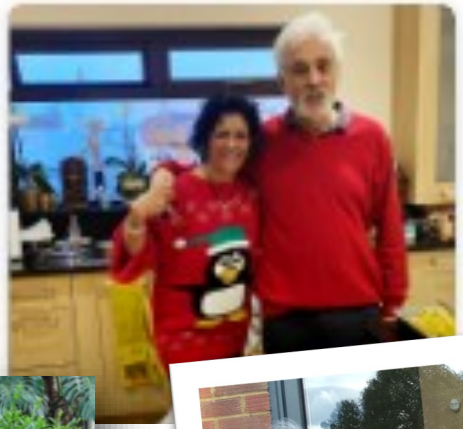
Vina has a great family as is so obvious in the photos and was born in 1947 (hope she doesn't mind me giving the year) She has 6 sisters and 2 brothers and played golf for 22 years (Captain at Hadley Wood)

Her son Rakesh and husband Chand continue the golfing tradition. She is now enjoying her retirement after being a qualified accountant but now seems to be busier than ever.

Met you on 11 May 2025 at the plaque ceremony on Southgate High street. Chatted with you afterwards at refreshments laid out for us at Southgate Club. Instant connection!! I am no gardener Can't tell a weed from whatever. Chand my husband looks after the small garden we have! You invited me to the TFL initiative to plant at Southgate station. I did! Met some lovely people

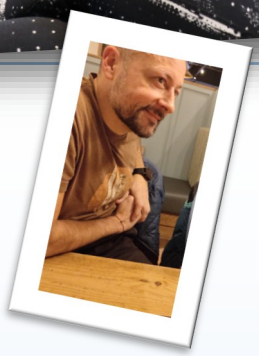


Two sisters in Nairobi not in photos. Eldest is Usha Shah MBE 88 years old. Yes a wonderful loving family. No hang ups. All get along.



That's us siblings in Nairobi Kenya in August 2019 when we all went for my eldest brother in law's funeral

Lynn and I forged an immediate friendship with this great couple. We have planted trees on Angela's meadow with them, walked along rivers, run in the Park Run together, met weekly for coffee and cakes...indeed we have laughed our way through the years together. They are very modest but quietly do so much to help others and their plans for a respite home in Spain is such a worthwhile venture. A peaceful spot for carers and their patients having problems set in a rural setting is such a wonderful goal and we know it will succeed . Their patients , both with Jose (in the optical world) and Cris (as a GP ) are so lucky to have such dedicated understanding people looking after them .



**Contribution for Ralph's 200th Photo History**

**"The Ageless Adventurers"**

Ralph and Lynn, What can we say?
You are living proof that *age really is just a number*.
While most of us fifty-somethings are still trying to recover from last Saturday, you two are already back from your morning swim, having planned your next trip, cooked lunch for six, read a book, and probably run a Parkrun before some people have even had coffee!

Your energy, curiosity, kindness, and enthusiasm are completely infectious.
You remind us that life isn't about slowing down , it's about **filling every moment** with laughter, friendship, conversation, good food, and a bit of adventure.

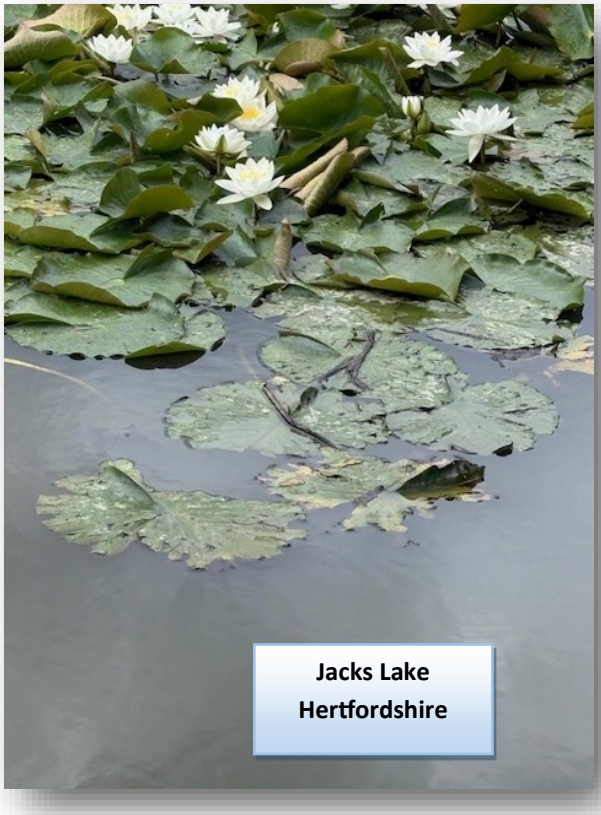
We feel so lucky to know you both, to share walks, films, meals, and chats about everything and anything.
You're a true example of how to live with joy, purpose, and a spark that never fades.

Here's to you, Ralph and Lynn , The ageless adventurers , still inspiring us all to keep moving, keep laughing, and keep saying *yes* to life.

With affection and admiration,

**Jose and Cris**

Ben is another 'Lad' . Walking with us all for many a moon. He has now retired and is enjoying his retirement. He kindly sent me these photos for his page

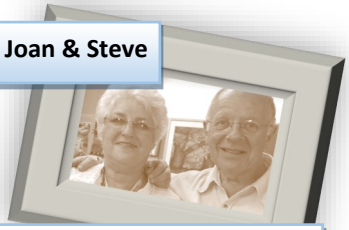


Jacks Lake
Hertfordshire

Ben always kept good company (until he joined our disreputable bunch of walkers)

'Eye Catching' were the attached words but Ben failed to label the individual photos so I'm un-sure which one he was referring to!

Joan and Steve have been great friends for many, many years and we always seem to have a great laugh with them both. Steve with his musical talents entertaining old folk often found his audience sleeping well to his music ……




….maybe lullabies was not a sensible musical choice.. Steve & I both share a delight in collecting old unusual objects (no rude comments please!) Lovely Joan has such a great artistic talent and we have seen her very eclectic and varied work in exhibitions and even have some adorning our walls at home. All in all , a fascinating and very wonderful duo...

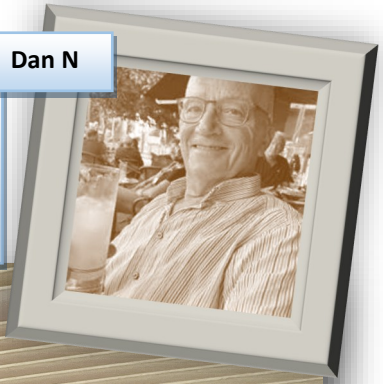
For the past few years I've been responsible for the Aesthetics in our new Synagogue Mosaic in Stanmore. It involved selecting everything from the floor tiles to the paint colour, lighting, kitchen cabinets and more. My passion for Artwork was the real thing that inspired me.

I led a small group of ladies and over time we produced 180 chairback covers decorated and stitched to hold prayer books. We have also made 12 large textile hangings to adorn the prayer spaces of the 3 different communities Reform, Liberal and Masorti.

The tryptic panels that receive much attention are these that tells the story of the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt as "they sang a new song on the shore of the sea" to 40 years in the desert with the word from Sinai to finally get to Jerusalem

They hang proudly in our building and we are about to embark on more works of stitched Judaica.

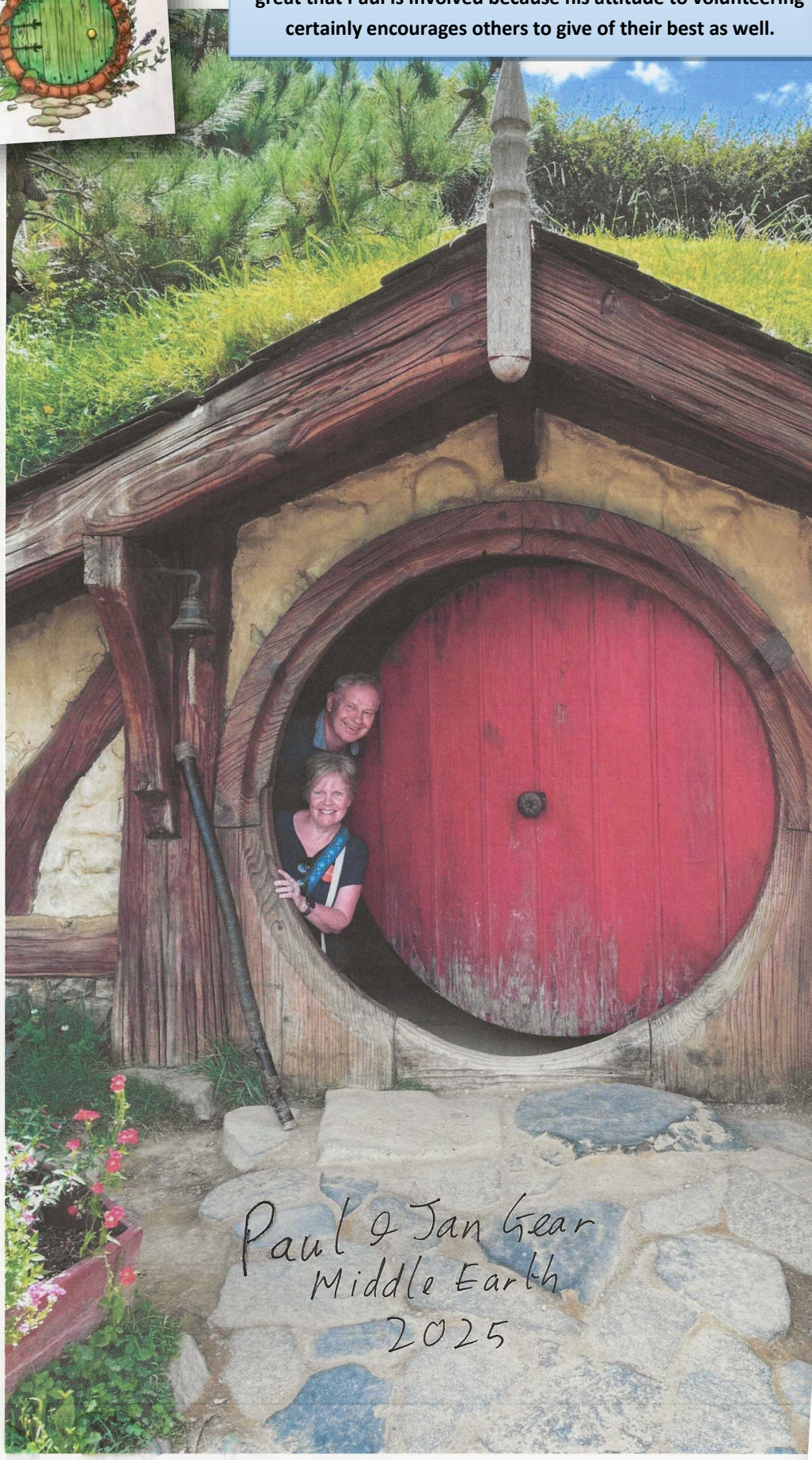
This is Dan with his good lady on The South Downs. Dan and I have walked together for many years and I have never seen him without his perpetual smile and good humour .It must be a real pleasure sitting in the sun above the sea after our muddy and rainy monthly walks...



Dan N

**Paul G**

**Paul joined the merry bunch of volunteers a while back and has certainly made his presence felt. A great organiser and always willing to help with planting, mulching , weeding and all the myriad requirements to enhance the Enfield Chase for others. It is so great that Paul is involved because his attitude to volunteering certainly encourages others to give of their best as well.**



Good afternoon Ralph , I've sent you 4 photos of Marianne's grandson Robert Sassoon's wedding to Savvy last Sunday. Both bride and groom are Magistrates . Hope you are well and we will see each other soon.

Peter and Maryanne are valued friends (I even catered their wedding). They are now enjoying a well-deserved retirement after Marianne enjoying a long career with her many childrens' nurseries and Peter constantly travelling as an international lawyer. Somehow we still maintained our long-standing friendship

Peter & Marianne

At Henley Royal Regatta in July 2005

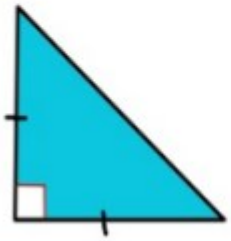
They have a large family spread across the world and despite advancing years they still highly respected and available to teach and pass on their very specialised 'true-life' experiences to a world eager to hear from them

**Ok. I had to bribe young Simon, a fellow early morning swimmer. He threatened to devote a page to seeing me every day in my underpants, without any explanation so a brown envelope of used fivers had to be passed across the changing room . Seriously though we daily have a quick laugh before Simon dons his helmet and cycles off into the cruel world**

## Mr Brilliant Does Maths

## Investigating Right-Angled Triangles

This is the worlds simplest right-angled triangle.
What can you tell about it? - answers upside-down



It's blue.
It's got two sides the same length.
It's an isosceles triangle.
It's got two angles the same size.
The missing angles are both 45°

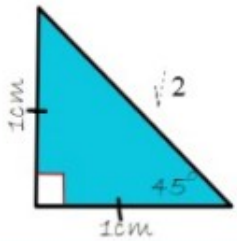
Give yourself 1 point for each one you get

We haven't put any lengths on it, so lets use the simplest numbers we can think of - how about side length = 1cm?

**What's the connection between sin 45° and the square root of 50?**

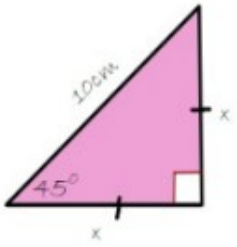
Lets start by finding the length of the sides of this simple triangle.
Use Pythagoras' Theorem....

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$
$$1^2 + 1^2 = c^2$$
$$1 + 1 = c^2$$
$$2 = c^2$$
$$\therefore \sqrt{2} = c$$




The pink triangle has a hypotenuse length of 10cm.
Lets use Pythagoras' to find the missing short sides....

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$
$$x^2 + x^2 = 10^2$$
$$2x^2 = 100$$
$$x^2 = 50$$
$$\therefore x = \sqrt{50}$$




We also remember all our Trigonometric Equations:

$$\sin(\theta) = \frac{\text{Opposite}}{\text{Hypotenuse}} \qquad \cos(\theta) = \frac{\text{Adjacent}}{\text{Hypotenuse}}$$

$$\sin(45^0) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \qquad \cos(45^0) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}$$

So $\sin 45^\circ = \cos 45^\circ = \ldots\ldots$ ?

But we can also look this up in our Book of Four-figure Tables....

**NATURAL SINES**

| | 0′ | 6′ | 12′ | 18′ | 24′ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 45 | ·7071 | 7083 | 7096 | 7108 | 7120 |
| 46 | ·7193 | 7206 | 7218 | 7230 | 7242 |
| 47 | ·7314 | 7325 | 7337 | 7349 | 7361 |
| 48 | ·7431 | 7443 | 7455 | 7466 | 7478 |
| 49 | ·7547 | 7559 | 7570 | 7581 | 7593 |
| 50 | ·7660 | 7672 | 7683 | 7694 | 7705 |

So the missing short sides are both the same value.....

...which is the square root of 50...

.. and using your calculator that is..... ?

(the square root of 49 is 7, so the answer must be 7 and a little bit more)

BUT, we also know

$$\sin(\theta) = \frac{\text{Opposite}}{\text{Hypotenuse}}$$

So for this pink triangle,

$$\sin(45^0) = \frac{\sqrt{50}}{10} \quad \text{or} \quad \sin(45^0) = \frac{7.071}{10}$$

$$= \frac{\sqrt{25 \times 2}}{10} = \frac{\sqrt{25} \times \sqrt{2}}{10} = \frac{5\sqrt{2}}{10} = \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}$$

So, the square root of 50 is the same as sin 45°, so long as you divide by 10. But it's ALSO square root of 2 divided by 2, or 1 divided by square root 2! AND the same as cos 45°

$$\sin 45^0 = 0.7071$$

$$\sqrt{50} = 7.071$$

Simon spent 30 years teaching Maths at a variety of schools in North London becoming Head of Department in 2 of them and Assistant Head in another. He's available for birthday parties and funerals.

It's not quite like your other ones, but what else do you expect from an argumentative maths teacher?

Cyril & Viv

Cyril and Viv are such a great fun couple. We enjoy their company both here in the UK and at many European cities where we always laugh, eat, visit art galleries...and did I mention 'eat' . Cyril and I have walked with all our other friends regularly and we don't like to mention how old they all look now... (possibly compared to us??) But seriously, this is such a valued friendship which will see the four of us walking together for many years to come.

Hi Ralph

You are the proof that if you nag sufficiently, it works. So please find attached.....

Cyril managed to get a good deal on his recent car part exchange

2021

There is a group of elderly, but active, gentlemen who get together on the last Friday of every month to walk in the beautiful countryside around London, or in mid-winter, in the wonderful city of London itself. I suppose the primary function is social, to spend a day amongst friends. It is of course also physical – helping us to keep fit. But for all except one of us, it is to admire and experience the world around us.

The one exception is a jovial fellow called Ralph. His aim is not to experience or admire but rather to record. He wanders through the paths and streets and lanes with a silver camera around his neck snap, snap, snapping much of what moves and a large part of what is still. And the rest of us next day receive batches of photographs to fill our accommodation in the cloud. I would admit to not appreciating these sufficiently; the day after a walk I can remember the views I saw and what I had for lunch. But I will admit, that on the odd occasion Ralph is not with us, I do miss the visual reminders and I know that is true of the rest of the group.

But of course Ralph is not thinking about the day after the walk. He is focussed on posterity. Many of this Fridays photos may fit nicely into album 210 and be enjoyed by him and his friends in the years after, bringing back memories we had truly thought were lost.. And as you read this missive, perhaps in 2026 or beyond, you will understand the value of the silver camera around Ralph's neck.

Tammy and her late husband Ben were inseparable and so happy together. She bravely nursed him and cared for him despite his debilitating illness. He constantly continued working and was such a dear member of our family . I am writing this with a lump in my throat and the pictures say it all especially the last one..

## What Knowing Ben Taught Me ..

There is SO much to say about a life that I was privileged to share . It's difficult to put it into a page or actually into words about such a great human .

He used to say we were meant to be together . We were the " n "

like *fish "n " chips / salt " n" vinegar / Ben " n" Tambo*

.. the FUN and laughter no matter what life threw at us .. there was SO much to Ben .. so many, many joyful memories that were often sad and testing but made our incredible bond SO strong when we needed each other most when all around us was unpredictable ..

My protector .. my super hero .. advisor , ombudsman. West ham armchair referee ..proud Disney adult ..always getting me everything in pink he could possibly find .. while being a tough real strong man who wasn't afraid of anything ..

He would know exactly what I was thinking .. He would plan to make me laugh by doing things he knew I would find funny no matter where he was ..

----like the 3 purely decorative hessian balls I bought that he despised . He would move them around the house (in the fridge , on the toilet seat etc )….. just to make me laugh ..One time he went away on business, and he made his own extra one out of homemade paper mache .. just to make me laugh when I found it in our bed under the pillow .. . It's these things that made him SO brilliant

Ben was everything good in the world .. a true old fashioned gentleman: soul mate and father, world renowned in his field of financial crime / money laundering reporting / compliance / terrorism finance fighter etc ..

He was a real life James Bond.. from the cheeky kid bunking off school, climbing up the balconies of a ten story flat when his mum had gone to work .. to someone who, through pure hard work and perseverance, worked his way from nothing (his mum said " he couldn't even address an envelope") …..to advising the government in the UK and USA .

No matter whom he met, be it a janitor, or the top business CEOs, he treated them with the utmost respect and care .. nobody was forgotten no matter who they were or what they did in life .. . Ben remembered them and their stories ..

In his wonderful laid back quiet way with a twinkle of brilliant humour he taught me to listen and learn, not to fill silences talking about oneself but to shine quietly and powerfully, which is a rare skill. From our first date which never ended .
I will try to make my life the legacy he created with me . I am grateful for the time we had together, the love & joy that most people may never experience ..
Just like you promised from your favourite films Ghost with Patric Swayze & The Body Guard ..

I know you are always with me .

Ben Hur you are my hero now and forever .. Big Blue " n " little pinky 4 ever

Mrs Tamara Hur

**Tammy, a special, wonderful daughter was so brave and I think her words here say it all.. I'll not add anything**

**Mickey 'Penguin' has become a valued companion on our volunteering tree planting sessions over many years and he seems to have an eye for natural small insects, plants and fungi that we would all miss. His life and loves are based on his love of music from a very important time in the UK music history as his story explains.**

**Mickey was kind enough to send me a twelve page 'potted' history which I have condensed down to four pages with sincere apologies if I have left out so much of interest**

I entered the gates of the secondary comprehensive school in September 1978 as a painfully shy eleven-year-old, with very little confidence in my ability to compete with my peers in many (or any) of the school curriculum subjects that lay ahead of me within the next five years of schooling. I was twelve years old in the summer of 1979, only becoming a teenager in December of that year.

I had made two or three new friends at my new school, all of whom had older brothers. These brothers, all being a year or two older, had an interest in music, so that interest trickled down to their siblings, and from there, diluted further down to me. These older brothers of these separate new friends of mine, liked similar kinds of music, mainly new-wave and punk. The Jam, Stiff Little Fingers, UK Subs, Skids, Ruts, Clash and so forth. During the dawn of 1979, I got to hear new sounds rom these bands (and more) via these older brothers of my friends, either at their parents' homes, or sometimes being given a compilation cassette tape to listen to privately.

I would start my record collection buying the odd 7" single locally at Tracks Records situated in the grey brutalist town centre of Hoddesdon, a grimy town on the Herts / Essex border where I lived out my formative years from around the age of six after being driven down south from my birth-city of Birmingham. My mother and father, uncles and aunties were all born and bred in Tottenham and Edmonton, but my parents moved to Birmingham in the early sixties for work. My older brother was born in 1964, myself in 1966 and younger brother in 1968. My mother and father moved us all down south in 1972.

The first record that I ever bought (and the first record that I ever bought from the Tracks record shop) was the 'Into The Valley' 7" single by Skids, and on white vinyl as well, which I still own.

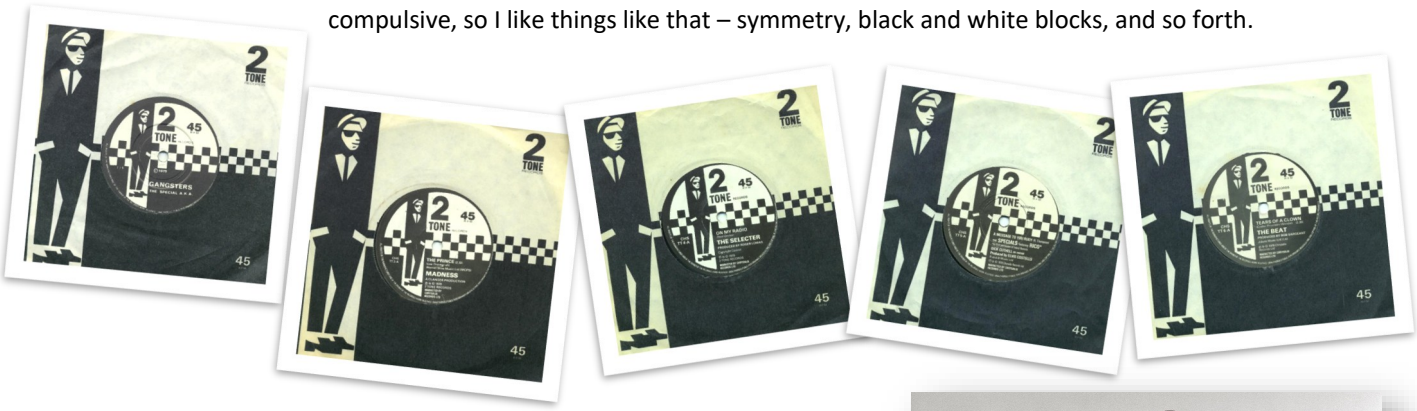
I would also get on my bicycle and ride the thirty odd minutes to Harlow in Essex, to look at the records being sold at the Startime record shop. In both shops I would buy a 7" single, the basic chart punk of the week that might have featured on the 'Top Of The Pops' TV programme, and preferably a coloured vinyl 7" record or a picture disc. Skids, UK Subs, Generation X, Stiff Little Fingers, the Clash, the Jam and the Ruts and other bands that were releasing records at that time in 1979 were all nice additions to my small but slowly growing 7" record collection.

I would stare at the picture sleeves trying to read every little detail written upon them, and study the sleeve artwork, or the photographs. Zoning out on 7" records was certainly more important than homework, my youthful schoolboy brain insisted.

A new band, the Specials arrived at my conciseness from chatting with my school friend John S in the summer of 1979. His elder brother had bought 'Gangsters', a record that had only just been released. A musical seismic eruption occurred within me, kick-starting my interest in music, and a lifetime of collecting records.

The Specials released 'Gangsters' on their own independent 2-Tone record label.

I bought all of the 7” singles that were released on the 2-Tone record label in 1979. I appreciated the monochrome designs of the generic sleeves, and the generic paper labels. I’m a bit obsessive compulsive, so I like things like that – symmetry, black and white blocks, and so forth.




The music within the grooves of those first few 2-Tone 7” records was instantly infectious. Added to this I thought the clothes that the bands wore in photographs in the music press or on TV shows like ‘Top Of The Pops’ were neat and sharp. The politics seemed righteous and fair, and somewhat ‘obvious’ even to a twelve year old (but presumably not all people thought so sadly - NF / BM skinheads on the rise) and furthermore, Pauline Black, the lead singer of the Selecter (sic), was to me back then, an absolute Goddess, and I had a magazine clipping of her on my bedroom wall!

I wore the tasseled loafer shoes, garish bright coloured socks. In fact, I was actually suspended briefly from school for wearing these garish bright coloured socks which were against school regulations. I had a couple of pairs of sta-press trousers, and a pair of two-tone tonic trousers. I had a couple of Fred Perry shirts, and I had a black Harrington jacket with the tartan lining. Generally, I was down the Edmonton Queensway Market with my mother on a Sunday morning, where a fair amount of these kinds of clothes would be purchased far cheaper than local High Street shops, especially if my mother haggled on my behalf. Crombie overcoats and full two-tone tonic suits (with the jacket *and the* trousers) were a little out of my price range as a twelve, soon to be a thirteen-year-old schoolboy, and my mother certainly wasn’t going to get anything too expensive!

For the first time in my life up to this point, I felt a part of something, both music-wise and fashion-wise. I was becoming a little bit more confident talking with people around me at school, especially if the subject was music based; ‘Have you got this record?”; "Did you see last night’s Top Of The Pops?"; “Are you going to the town disco later on?”; “Are you going to the Youth Club later on?”. So, I run with it, leaving my school studies on the back burner, indeed forever leaving my school studios there on the backburner, as my school reports and exam results would eventually testify to! From this point on, buying records from great bands was my main priority in the life, absolutely. This priority was far more important than everything else, especially schoolwork.

The first album that I ever bought was the debut Specials album released on the 2-Tone record label sometime during the release week, late October or early November 1979. Interestingly, to me at least, I bought the album from Rumbalows, an electrical store set in the grey brutalist town centre, rather than the Tracks record shop. The album, which was in the window display at Rumbalows was cheaper than in the Tracks record shop.

All of the 2-Tone bands that released 7" records in 1979; the Specials, the Selecter, Madness as well as the Beat led me to an interest to the original Jamaican ska and rocksteady records from the sixties, and an interest towards all those original artists whose songs were rerecorded by those 2-Tone bands, some of those rerecorded songs ending up on those bands albums and 7" singles that were released.

My interest piqued, and in the early months of 1980, I bought the two 'Intensified' compilation albums and the 'Catch This Beat' compilation album, all released by Island Records to cash-in on the new 2-Tone craze sweeping the country. I bought Prince Busters album; 'FAB – Greatest Hits', a Desmond Dekker album, and some original 7" singles from the original Jamaican artists, 'Liquidator', '007', 'Rough Rider', 'Pomp and Pride', 'Guns of Navarone', 'Al Capone', all of which I still own.

All these records bolstered my now slightly larger record collection, which continued to grow throughout the months, years and decades ahead until I had a few thousand records!

All released in 1979, those first four 7" singles released on the 2-Tone record label were among the first twenty or thirty records that I ever bought. I still own them, and I cherish them with respect to my past. My first experience of a music and fashion scene. More importantly giving a painfully shy schoolboy a chance to engage a little more that whole 2-Tone craze at school, and of course, a chance to engage a little more with other kids within that whole 2-Tone craze who met up at the local Youth Club, all of us sipping a watered-down orange squash from a plastic cup.

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**POSTSCRIPT:** Being so engaged in music at a young age, and leaving school in the summer of 1983, I was lucky enough to eventually work within the music industry starting helping at a record label called All The Madmen, in the squats of Hackney from 1985 and four years afterwards becoming the warehouse manager of the largest independent record distribution company in Europe until I left in 2018. Around thirty-three years of my life!

The 'Black Funk' album released in 1969, was an album that cashed in on the skinhead fashion of the latter six-ties and early seventies and catered to the skinhead's taste in Jamaican music by a cover's band called Brixton Market, a studio band that had re-recorded the big ska and big rocksteady hits of the day.

Obviously, the original versions of these songs that were covered on the 'Black Funk' album would always be fa-voured, but these re-recorded versions by Brixton Mar-ket are NOT actually crap, in fact as cheap cash-in albums go, this album is pretty good!

This album is very sentimental to me. Music brings forth many memories, and my memory of this album is being at my first ever all-night party. The reason for the party was a birthday bash for my school friend's older brother. My school friend John S, who was mentioned previously.

The party was held in the early months of 1980 during the height of the 2-Tone craze when I was thirteen years old. Some guests in attendance were decked out with button down or Fred Perry shirts, sta-press or two-tone tonic trousers, feet wrapped up in garish coloured socks within the safe confines of a pair of tasselled loafers or Hush Puppies desert boots. A cou-ple of people wore two-tone tonic suits, one of which was John S's elder brother. I was dressed in similar clothing and shoes (as I described earlier on the previous pages) and I was wrapped up in my black Harrington jacket. All of the guests were older than John S and me.

This party, besides being my first all-nighter, was the first time I ever tried lager. At this party I was feeling like I should try to 'fit' in and not lose face in front of the older guests, so when I was offered a can of Special Brew lager I accepted. After two or three swigs I realised that the taste of lager was not so appealing to me as I struggled to keep the vomit gag reflexes to a minimum covertly.

Due to being gifted a few cans of Special Brew over the next few hours by older guests, I proceeded to use the toilet a fair few times, sometimes for natural reasons, but mostly to pour sizable amounts of Special Brew down the sink. I would return to the party with a lighter can pretending to have drunk it if I was asked, acting a little bit 'drunk'. This deception went on throughout the duration of the party.

I could have said, "No" to the older guests continuing to offer these cans to me, but at my age, keeping face was relatively important. I was very shy and introverted, so I did not want to attract any negative attention, or piss-taking from the older guests, refusing their drink 'hospitality' whilst being stuck in the house with them for hours. The fact that I was only thirteen years old didn't seem to bother any of the older guests, so I just carried on.

While I was chucking perfectly 'good' Special Brew down the sink throughout the duration of the party, the musical back-ground to the evening; and on repeat several times throughout the night, was this album, 'Black Funk' by Brixton Market.

Eventually the sun came up. I searched around, found and put on my Harrington jacket, and I said thank you and wished both John S and his brother well with a slight 'drunken slur', purely for effect rather than being drunk. My feet wrapped up in garish coloured socks within the safe confines of tasselled loafers, I 'wobbled dizzily' out the house. I did not want to give away my deception and get found to have wasted all of the gifted Special Brew that I was handed throughout the last few hours, hence I 'wobbled dizzily' out of the house, again purely for effect, rather than being drunk!

The greatest story ever told this is not, but to this day I still remember this cheap album 'Black Funk' by Brixton Market with fondness first hearing it at the party that was held in the early months of 1980, it's flaws and its magnificence in equal parts, as part of that night.

Mickey 'Penguin'.

**Beau our grandson & Ottie our great granddaughter**

**Beau is a very special guy. He seems to have the ability to be loved by everyone he meets and obviously Lynn and I are totally proud of him**

**When he graduated in Bath we were so happy to see him on stage and his 'on stage' efforts now include making these massive festival sound systems for which he is becoming very well known . He is a wonderful father to our lovely Ottie and the love and bond between them is very apparent**

**The love between Beau and Ottie (his daughter) comes through the family and Peachy (his sister) all grandmas (Lynn Mary and Angela) and late grandad (David and myself) all delight in how Beau behaves and is making his mark in the world**

Here is a collage of some of his photos from the last year.

"A few of my favorite moments of 2025"

Larnie one of our lovely granddaughters

Always original , Lynn and I just received these wonderful 'Love letters' from Larnie. She seems to encapsulate all the fun we have together in her unique way

# A LOVE LETTER TO MY GRANDPARENTS

TO: Grandma

FROM: Larnie

When I think of love, I think of how it shows up in everything you do. When you ask, "Have you had enough to eat?" after I've eaten every snack in sight, and then you make me a (John Lewis) bag full of salmon bagels to take home (with my favourite chocolate bar inside too, of course)

It's your bright yellow slippers you give me so I can pop outside and see the garden with grandad.

When we sit down on the sofa together, wrapped under a blanket, with your huge thesaurus, playing Scrabble and having a go at crosswords.

It's the smell of your morning coffee after you've gone for a park run (done ever so glamorously)

For all the moments we've chatted about hair and makeup and all things girly, going up to town and hanging out, my best friend.

For all the times you've supported me and cheered me on.

For your effortless grace, your absolute beauty and a smile that I always look forward to seeing.

For everything you've taught me about ambition, resilience, elegance and eloquence.

I love you so much xxx

Larnie xxx

A very special relationship

# A LOVE LETTER TO MY GRANDPARENTS

TO: Grandad

FROM: Larnie

When I think of love, I think of your unconditional and unwavering love of people, plants and life.

It's the meals you make that always seem to be ready at the exact moment I'm hungry! And the French toast and schnitzel recipes you've taught me (with plenty of them being tried along the way...)

It's your dedication to your garden and to the nature around you, planting and caring so that generations to come can enjoy a bit of magic.

It's the night-time calls to say goodnight and have a catch-up, excited to share all the things you have got up to and what I have been doing.

It's the photographs and videos from so many years, carefully documenting all our memories, each page like a love letter to our lives.

Your love is all the snuggles and kisses on the cheeks, and for all the times you've lit incense in the room for when I stay over.

It's the chats we've had in the office, flicking through books and talking about life.

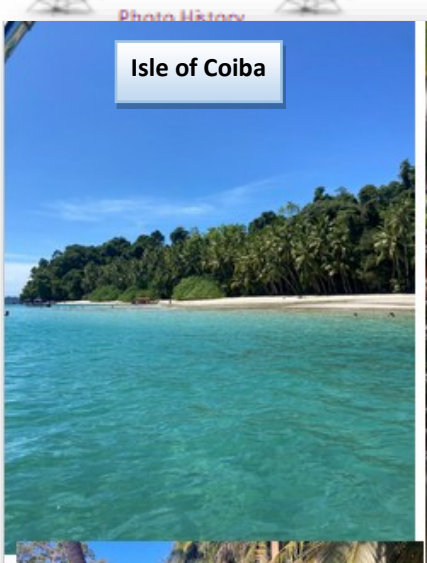
For everything you've taught me about the importance of having a cause, empathy and selflessness.

I love you so much xxx

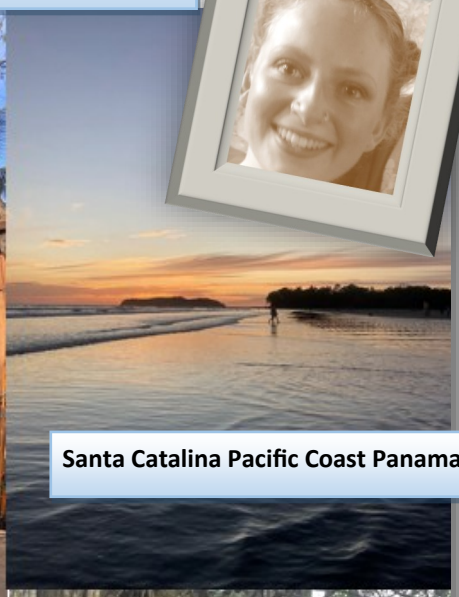
Larnie xxx

Peachy our lovely youngest granddaughter

Isle of Coiba



Tribal Gathering. Caribbean Coast Panama



Santa Catalina Pacific Coast Panama

Panama City

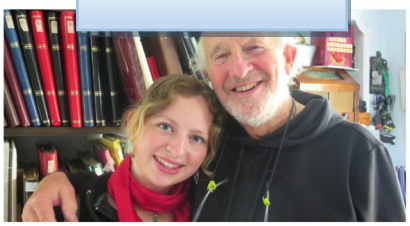
Tribal Gathering. Caribbean Coast Panama

Isle of Coiba

Nicaragua

Tribal Gathering

In my study in 2024



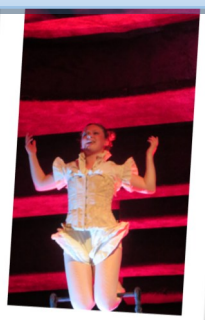
My star commis chef

2021 Camden

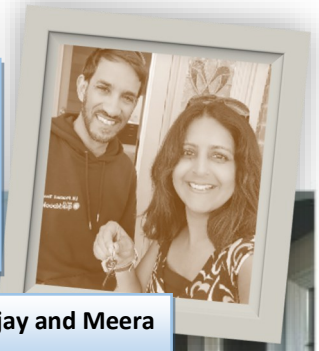
Peachy is so amazing , starring on a trapeze in theatre in Bath to having a great time with Dad at the regular annual Panama festival

Bath with Mum

Trapeze act in Bath



Lynn and I have the pleasure of only knowing Meera and Ajay for a comparatively short time but we 'clicked' from the start and now they are neighbours. They lead a really busy life and travel to such exotic places that it is amazing they actually get time to run!



Ajay and Meera

Ajay has had his passport updated so he is now legally allowed to travel from Croydon to Southgate (joke) and we hope that 2025 they will have more time to join 'the gang' swigging coffee and scoffing delicious cakes at Coffee Island locally

Ah Ralph. We met you and Lynn at a very pivotal time in our lives. Firstly, Ajay and I joined Parkrun in April 2025 after the sudden death of my best friend's 16-year-old son – a gorgeous, chatty boy, very smart who loved school and was looking forward to university next year, into science, politics and conservation, but also a keen and brilliant runner, and a member of a local running club. We wanted to do something that he loved, and it was through Parkrun we met you both.

And secondly, after seven and a half years together, Ajay and I were mid-way through buying our first house together at this same time. I was moving, erm, three streets away from my Southgate flat – I'd lived on my street for 27 years – while Ajay was moving several boroughs north from Croydon.

A pleasure to know you both. Here's to more walks and runs around Grovelands and warming coffees and chat in Southgate afterwards. Wishing you both excellent health and plenty of adventure!

Meera and Ajay xxx